

Creationism: A Historical Perspective

Jonathan Fisher
Reasons To Believe

Huntsville, Alabama Network
hsvrtb@me.com

This Briefing Is Part of An
Oral Presentation and Is
Incomplete Without the
Corresponding Narrative

- What is a Creationist?
- What is Creationism? Is it Intelligent Design?
- What do creationist believe?
- Is creationism science or does creationism contradict science?
- What is the debate all about?
- When did the debate start?

Views on Creation

Interpretation	24 hr	not 24 hr	Time is testable?
1. Calendar-day	x		Some say yes others no
2. Day Age, Day = long periods of time		x	Yes
3. Gap Theory	x	with 1 gap	Yes
4. Intermittent days of Creation	x	>1 gap	Days-No, Time-Yes
5. Days of Devine Fiat	x		NA
6. Days of Revelation	x		NA
7. Day Age, Day = 1000 years		x	No
8. Instantaneous Day of Creation	NA		No
9. Framework Hypothesis	Yes	or Yes	Yes but not relevant
10. Theistic Evolution		x	Yes
11. Myth/Poetry			Does not really matter

What do Young Earth Creationists (aka, creation science groups) believe?

- Biblical literalism
- Biblical inerrancy
- Creation science rejects the fundamentals of modern geology (accept catastrophism and reject uniformitarianism, nature has both)
- Creation science rejects the fundamentals of evolution (accept fiat creation and micro-evolution but rejects macro-evolution)
- Creation science rejects the fundamentals of cosmology (reject the big bang or any cosmology that includes ages \gg 10,000 years)
- Creation science rejects some of the basics of nuclear physics (reject radioactive decay and dating methods)

What do scientist think about Creationist?

- The scientific community has overwhelmingly rejected the ideas put forth in creation science as lying outside the boundaries of a legitimate science
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/
List of scientific societies explicitly rejecting intelligent design](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_scientific_societies_explicitly_rejecting_intelligent_design)
- What they are rejecting is really young earth creationist!

History of Interpretations of the Creation day

Jewish Scholars and Early church leaders:

Philo (20 BC-45 AD)—In his reveal of Genesis: God created everything instantaneously and that the six days were figurative, a metaphor for order and completeness.

Josephus (37-103 AD)—Cops out:

“But Moses said it was one day; the cause of which I am able to give even now; but because I have promised to give such reasons for all things in a treatise by itself, I shall put off its exposition till that time”.

Josephus, *THE LIFE AND WORKS OF FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS, TRANSLATED BY WILLIAM WHISTON, A. M. PROFESSOR OF MATHEMATICS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE*

Justin Martyr (100-166 AD) and Irenaeus (130-200 AD) used Psalm 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8 (read these) as to support their view that creation days were each a thousand years long.

History of Interpretations (Con't)

Hippolytus (170-236 AD)—Indirectly from Ambrose (340-397 AD).

Day = 1000 years.

Origen (185-254 AD) — Difficult call since time as we know it did not exist until day 4.

Augustine—in reference to day (or yom) “it is difficult, perhaps impossible to think—let alone explain in words —what they mean”

...concluded that the “evenings and mornings” in Genesis referred to the occasion when the angels gazed down on the created things after they contemplated the Creator.

... The seventh day is an epoch extended onward to eternity.

Ambrose (AD 340-397)—a bishop of Milan interpreted Genesis as 6-solar days.

Luther's Genesis Lecture (1535-1545) Comments:

LUTHER'S WORKS., Volume 6 By Martin Luther, Jaroslav Jan Pelikan

"The first chapter is written in the simplest language; yet it contains matters of the utmost importance and very difficult to understand. It was for this reason, as St. Jerome asserts, that among the Hebrews it was forbidden for anyone under thirty to read the chapter or to expound it for others. They wanted one to have a good knowledge of the entire Scripture before getting to this chapter. Not even with this practice, however, did the Jewish Rabbis achieve anything worthwhile; for in their commentaries men twice thirty and even older prattle most childishly about these extremely important matters."

Luther's Genesis Lecture (1535-1545) Comments:

LUTHER'S WORKS., Volume 6 By Martin Luther, Jaroslav Jan Pelikan

“Until now there has not been anyone in the church either who has explained everything in the chapter with adequate skill. The commentators, with their sundry, different, and countless questions, have so confused everything in the chapter as to make it clear enough that God has reserved His exalted wisdom and the correct understanding of this chapter for Himself alone, although He has left with us this general knowledge that the world had a beginning and that it was created by God out of nothing. This general knowledge is clearly drawn from the text. As to particulars, however, there are differences of opinion about very many things, and countless questions are raised at one point or another.”

History of Interpretations (Con't)

Lightfoot and Ussher—

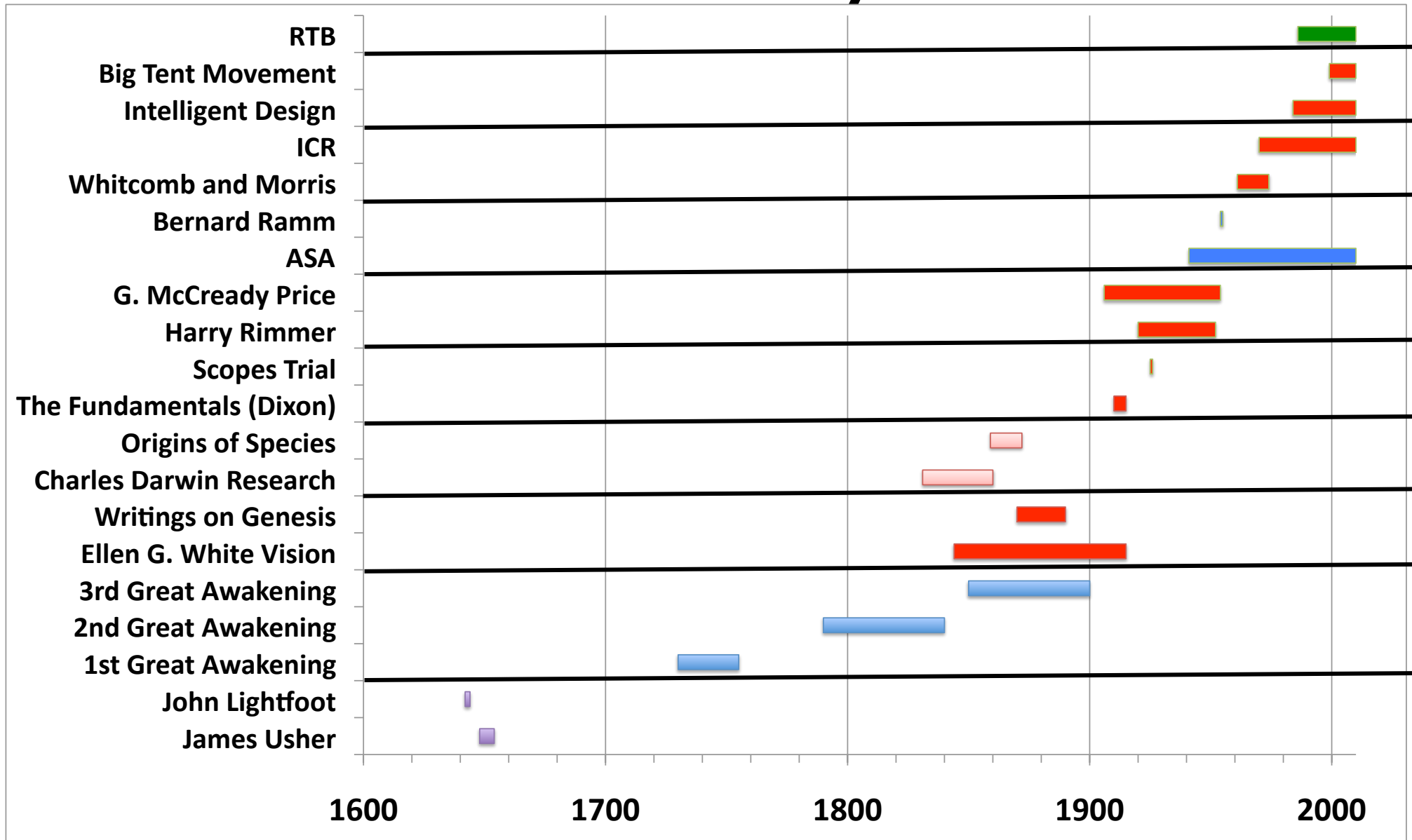
In 1642 John Lightfoot, Cambridge university, published his calculation of the exact creation date of the universe was on Sept 17, 3928 BC.

Eight years later James Ussher, an Anglican archbishop of Ireland, published his creation to October 3, 4040 BC.

Lightfoot further corrected this stating that Adam was created at 9 AM October 23, 4004 BC.

This is the basis for what people called Ussherettes or Ussher's Chronology.

Creationist History Overview



Ussher's Assumptions

In order to use the Bible genealogies by themselves to establish a chronology of events several assumptions must be made:

- 1) the Bible text analyzed must have the correct original numbers,
- 2) the genealogy must be complete, no substantial numbers of generations left out,
- 3) the genealogies must overlap all the events being dated,
- 4) the purpose of the genealogies must be consistent with a chronological use.

Don Stoner, "A New Look at the Old Earth",
<http://www.answers.org/newlook/NEWLOOK.HTM#Contents>

Ussher's Chronology

- Ussher's chronology provides the following dates for key events in the Biblical history of the world:
- 4004 BC - Creation
- 2348 BC - Noah's Flood
- 1921 BC - God's call to Abraham
- 1491 BC - The Exodus from Egypt
- 1012 BC - Founding of the Temple in Jerusalem
- 586 BC - Destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon and the beginning of the Babylonian Captivity
- 4 BC - Birth of Jesus

"Primeval Chronology"

Bibliotheca Sacra

April, 1890

(pp. 285-303)

by Dr. William Henry Green
(1825-1900)

Professor of Old Testament
Princeton Theological Seminary

Exposed the problems with Ussher and
Lightfoot

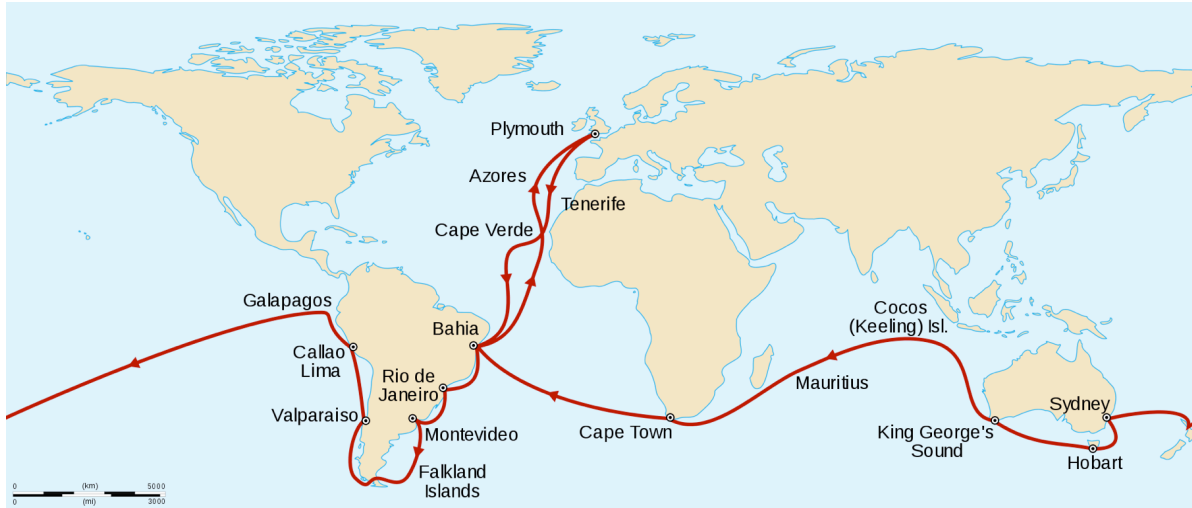
Ellen G. White

An American Christian pioneer whose ministry was instrumental in founding the Sabbatarian Adventist movement that led to the rise of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

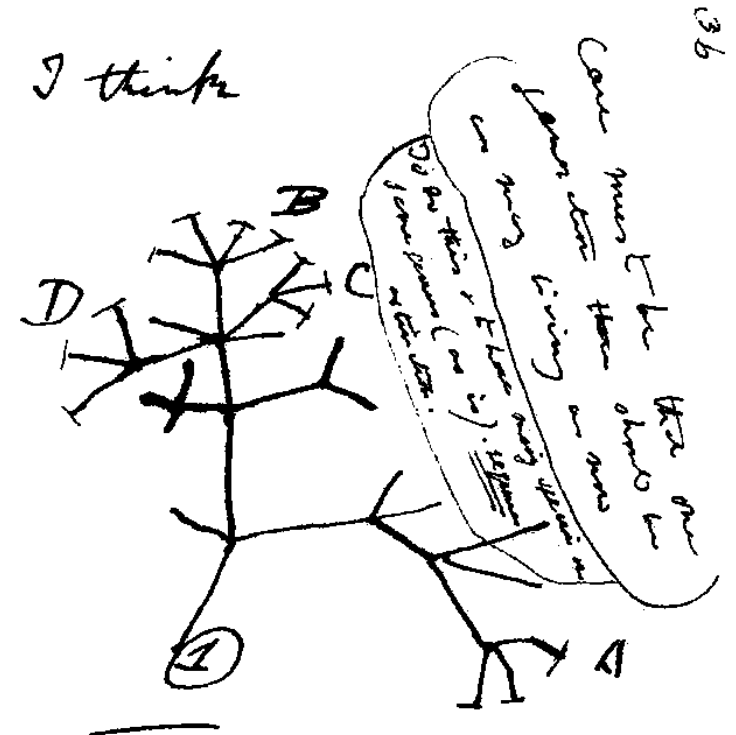
<http://www.whiteestate.org/>

- **Patriarchs and Prophets:** The story of the conflict of good and evil from its beginning, starting with the origin of evil, the creation of the world, the biblical patriarchs, Israel's bondage and exodus, and their establishment in Canaan up to the time of David.
- **Prophets and Kings** continues the story from the time of Solomon through the remaining kings of Israel and Judah and the times of the prophets, down to the coming of the Messiah, providing an extraordinary look at the unity of the Holy Bible.
- **The Desire of Ages** is Ellen White's classic masterpiece on the life and ministry of Jesus, following His birth, ministry, and death and resurrection in a profoundly moving and insightful way.
- **The Acts of the Apostles** presents the story of the early Christian church through the rest of New Testament times, exploring the miracles and controversies that shaped God's people after the ascension of Jesus Christ.
- **The Great Controversy** picks up the story at the destruction of Jerusalem and follows, in a broad outline, the major issues of the conflict between Christ and Satan as they have been seen in the history of the Christian church down to our own day and beyond.

Charles Darwin



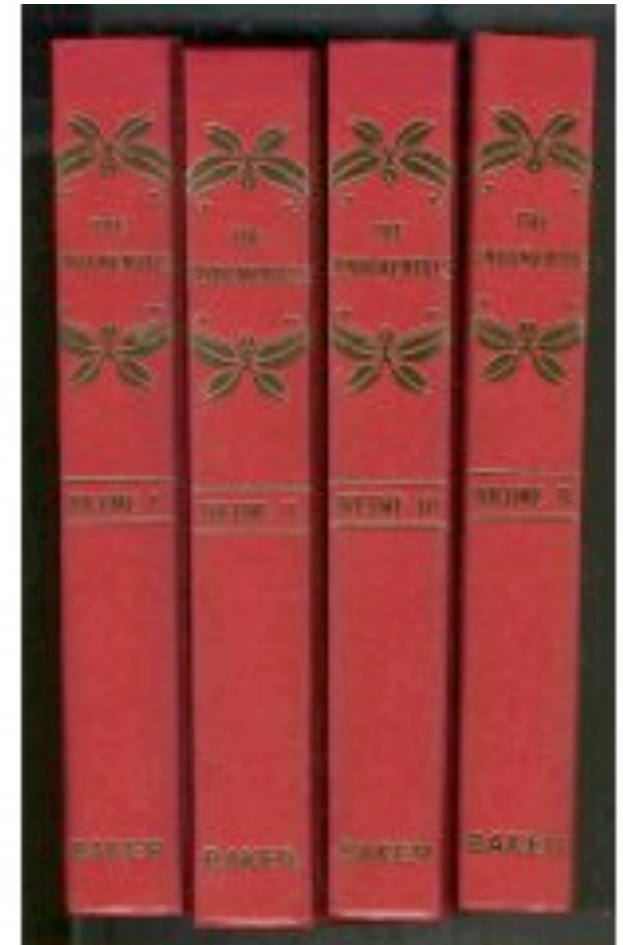
- In mid-July 1837 Darwin started his "B" notebook on *Transmutation of Species*, and on page 36 wrote "I think" above his first evolutionary tree.
- The publisher agreed the title as On the Origin of Species through Natural Selection and the book went on sale to the trade on 22 November 1859.



Then between A & B. various
 sort of relation. C & B. The
 first predation, B & D
 rather greater distinction
 Then genus would be
 formed. - binary relation

The Fundamentals* or *The Fundamentals: A Testimony To The Truth edited by A. C. Dixon and later by [Reuben Archer Torrey](#)

- The original 1910 to 1916 printings divided the articles in 12 paper bound volumes.
- Printings after 1917 divided the articles into 4 hard bound books
- Published by THE BIBLE INSTITUTE of LOS ANGELES (aka BIOLA)
- Source of the term Fundamentalists



Background: The Scopes Trial

1) Antievolution Laws: First attempted in Kentucky but vote failed.

William Jennings Bryan and others shifted their attention to Tennessee.

Antievolution Bill introduced on Jan 20, 1925 by Senator John A. Shelton of Savannah. The bill made it a felony to teach evolution in the public schools of the state. (in the newspaper)

Butler proposed making a misdemeanor, punishable by a maximum fine of 500 for a public school teacher to “teach any theory that denies the story of the Divine Creation of man taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man had descended from a lower order of animal.

John Bluter, house of representatives, offered a similar bill a day later.

“The people have a right and much have the right to regulate what is taught in their schools” WJ Bryan.

Background: The Scopes Trial (Con't.)

2) News hit the papers:

3) ACLU puts an add in all of the large newspapers in Tennessee.

4) Dayton takes the hook (The mayor, business-men and the Masonic Lodge).

**5) Scopes get arrested? Or propositioned?
He did not spend a moment in Jail.**

6) Did scopes teach evolution?

He was a Physics and Math teacher that filled in for the Principle for a review of Hunter's Civic Biology.

Defense did not let him of the stand due to fear that Scopes would show his ignorance.

Background: The Scopes Trial (Con't.)

7) Who were William Jennings Bryan and Clarence Darrow.

Bryan was a Colonel from the Spanish-American War.

Bryan was a 3-time presidential candidate, a social liberal and Biblical conservative and believer in the day-age.

Clarence Darrow was a well known lawyer.

8) Other city newspaper were outraged at Dayton for this blatant attempt to get publicity.

Other cities tried to capture the Dayton showcase but lost.

Finally tried to get the trial transferred to Knoxville.

9) News papers, preachers, and scientist (add many others) came to Tennessee to get the attention.



William Jennings Bryan



Clarence Darrow

After: The Scopes Trial

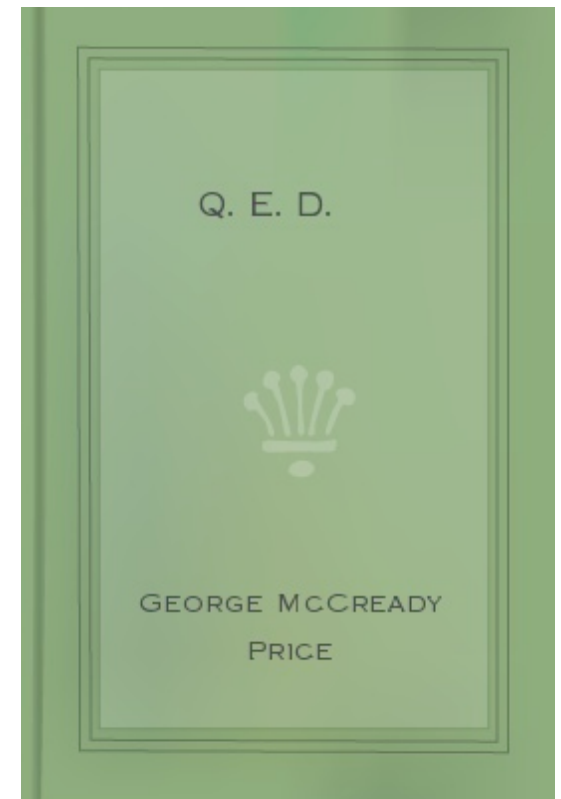
- 1) The outcome was initially publicized as a draw.**
- 2) Bryan planned to hit the tour to continue his quest but Bryan died the Sunday following the trial.**
- 3) Fundamentalism continued to grow. Anti-evolution laws passed in several southern and western states.**
- 4) Strong press against the treatment of Bryan by Darrow helped Bryan's cause and hurt the appeal for the Defense.**
- 5) The ACLU tried to regain control by eliminating Darrow from the defense team and failed.**
- 6) Later, text book vendors developed special text for the "south".**
- 7) Scopes accepted a scholarship to the University of Chicago, earned an degree in Geology, and never made it in academia and then worked for an Oil company studying oil reserves.**

George McCready Price

- a Seventh-Day Adventist author of “QED or New Light on the Doctrine of Creation (1917)” or “The New Geology: a Textbook for Colleges Normal schools, and Training Schools; and for the General Reader” (1923)

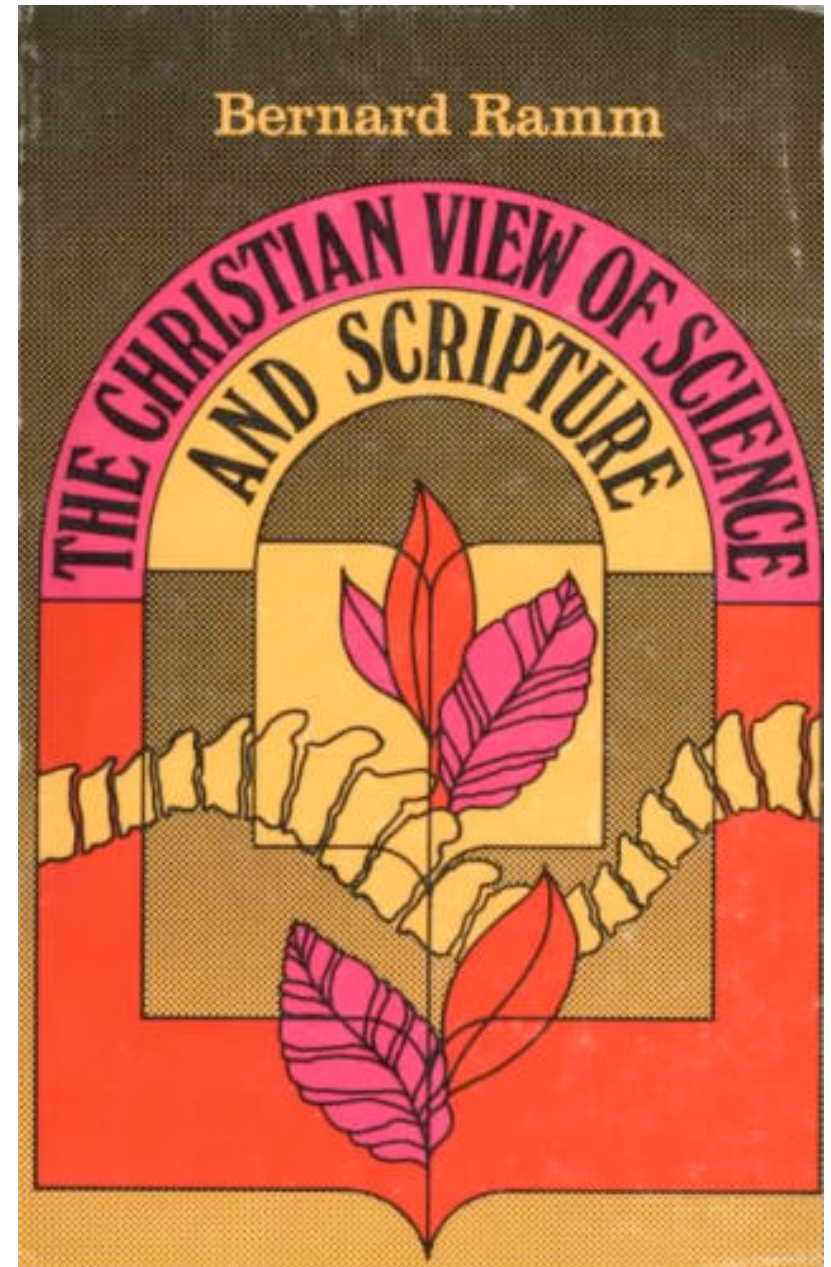


George McCready Price



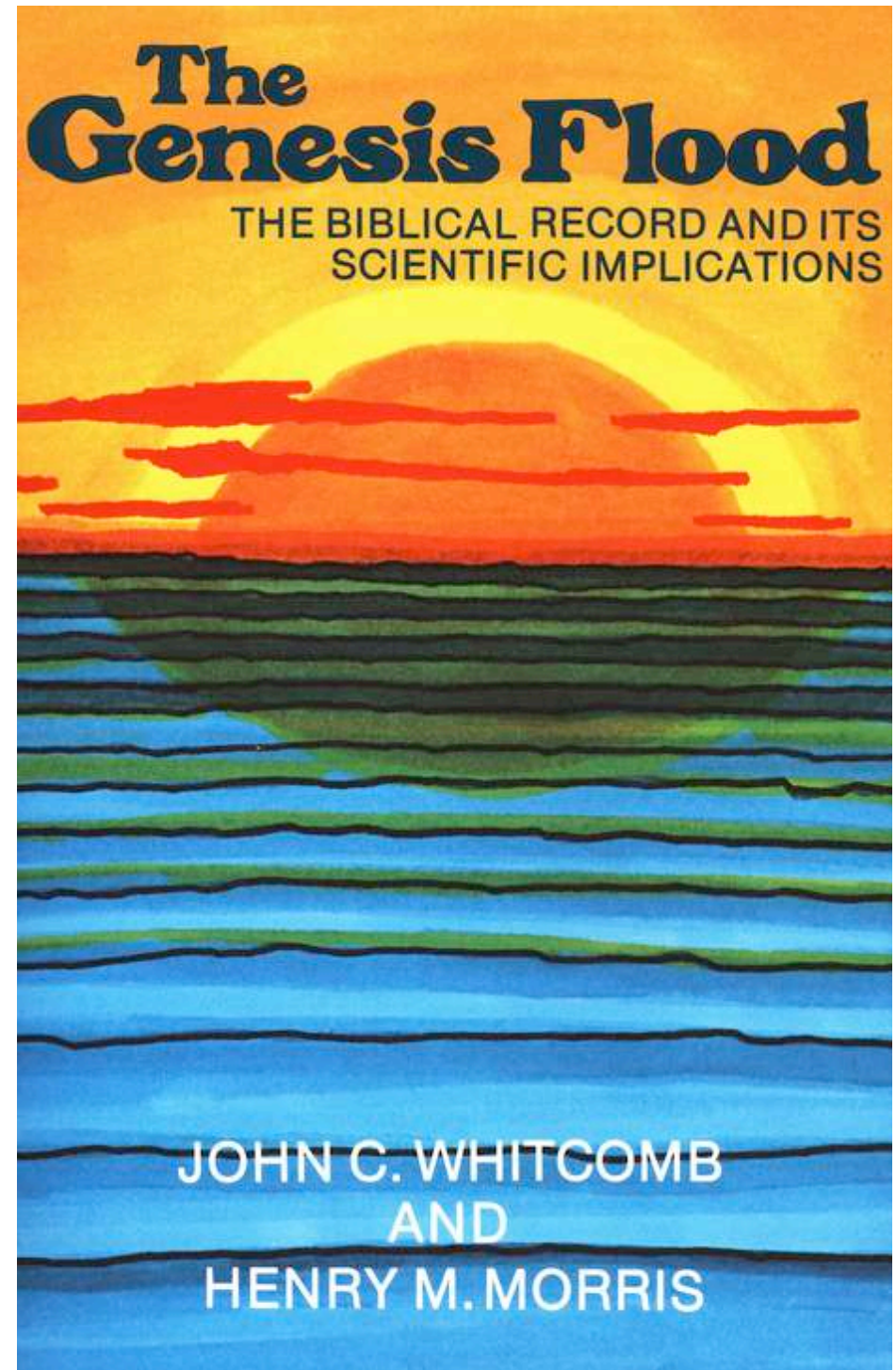
Bernard Ramm's Little Book

- The Christian View of Science and Scripture, published in 1954,
- Influenced the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA) in not supporting "flood geology" during the 1950s



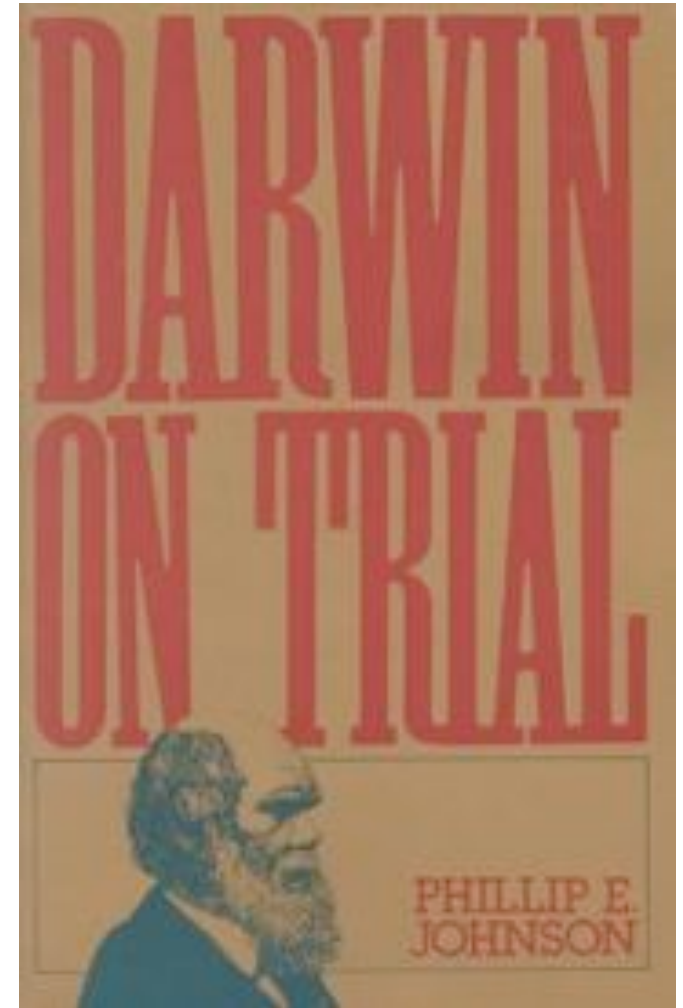
Whitcomb and Morris' ***Response***

- Henry M. Morris and John C. Whitcomb with their 1961 book entitled "The Genesis Flood".
- Based upon same flood geology as George McCready Price



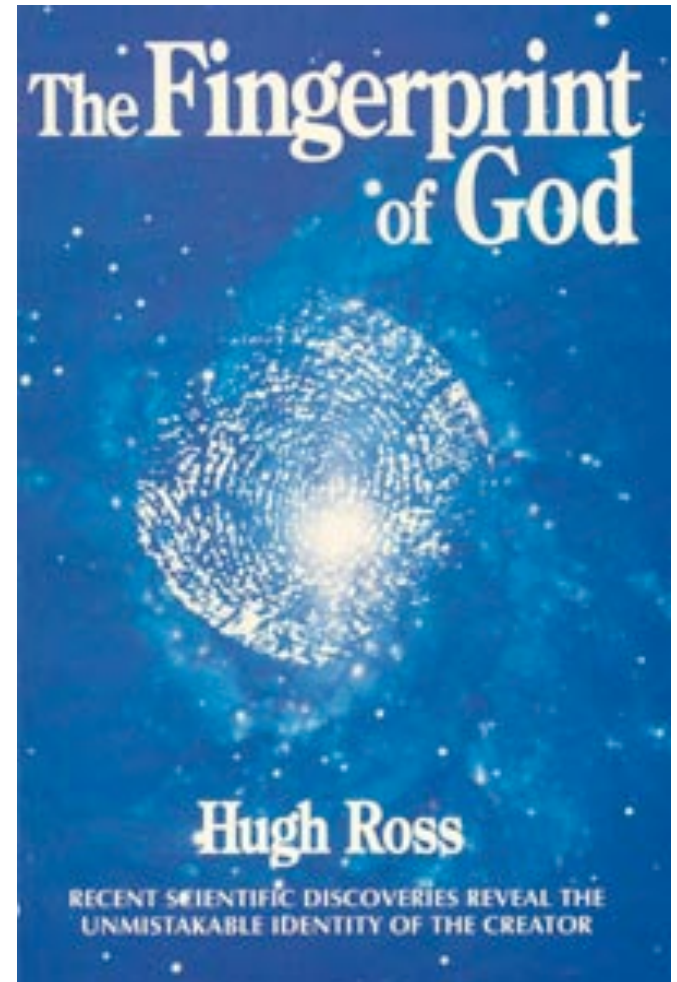
Philip Johnson and The Big Tent

- Retired UC Berkeley law professor and author.
- He is considered the father of the intelligent design movement, which rejects the theory of evolution, and promotes intelligent design, as an alternative.
- Paul A. Nelson credits Johnson for the "big tent" approach and for reviving creationist debate

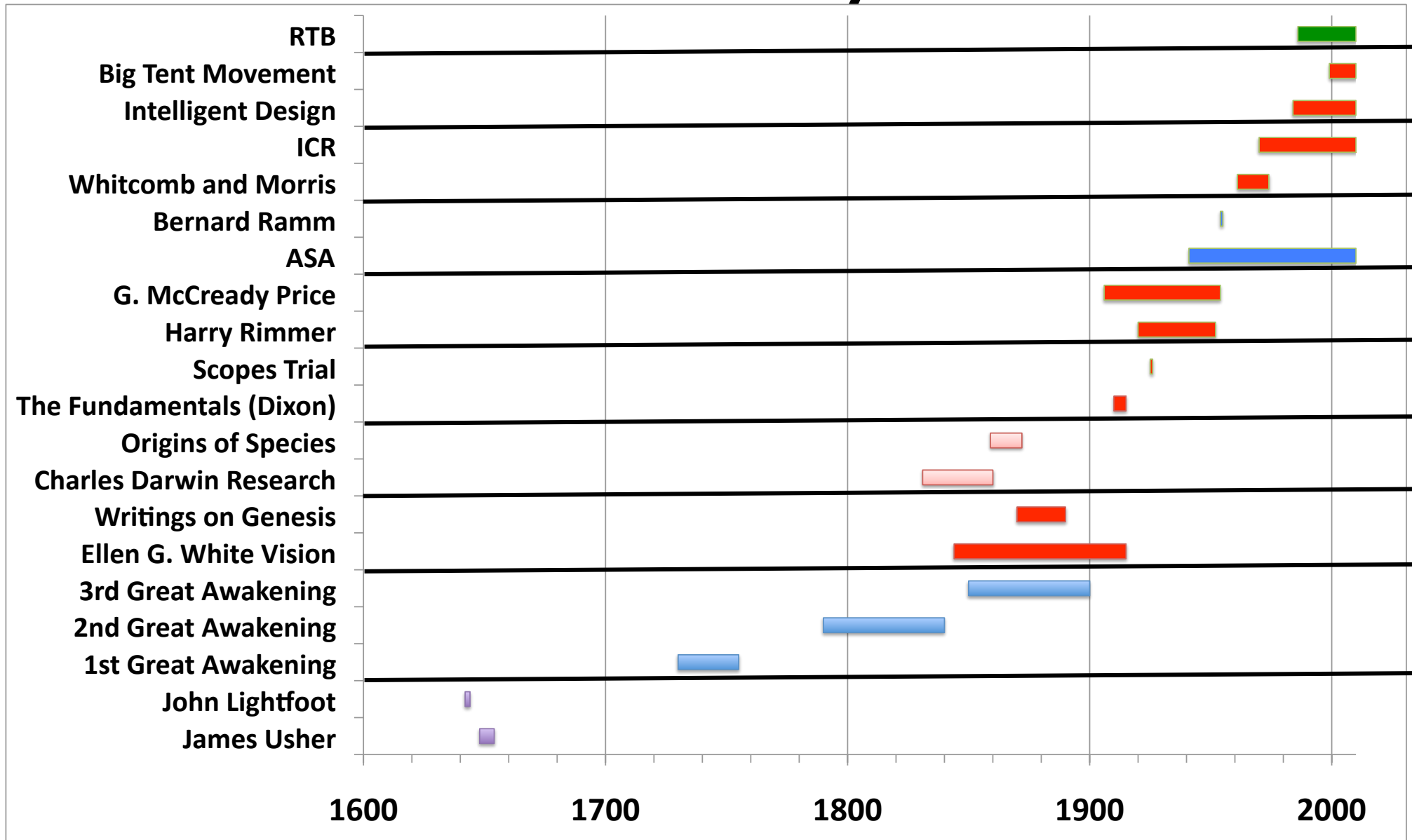


Hugh Ross and Reasons to Believe

- An astronomer and astrophysicist, established Reasons To Believe in 1986
- Ross adopts the view that there are two "records" of revelation from God – the Bible and nature
- Ross and RTB are engaged in proposing an alternate, scientifically testable model for the formation of the universe, earth, and life



Creationist History Overview



Views on Creation

Interpretation	24 hr	not 24 hr	Time is testable?
1. Calendar-day	x		Some say yes others no
2. Day Age, Day = long periods of time		x	Yes
3. Gap Theory	x	with 1 gap	Yes
4. Intermittent days of Creation	x	>1 gap	Days-No, Time-Yes
5. Days of Devine Fiat	x		NA
6. Days of Revelation	x		NA
7. Day Age, Day = 1000 years		x	No
8. Instantaneous Day of Creation	NA		No
9. Framework Hypothesis	Yes	or Yes	Yes but not relevant
10. Theistic Evolution		x	Yes
11. Myth/Poetry			Does not really matter

Recommended References

- The Christian View of Science and Scripture, Bernard Ramm
- The Genesis Flood, John C. Whitcomb & Henry M. Morris
- Creation and Time, Hugh Ross
- The Creationist, Ronald Numbers (now has a new and expanded edition)
- Summer for the Gods, Edward Larson (Pulitzer Prize)
- The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind, Mark Noll